

The “Irrepressible Conflict:” Policing in Civil War-Era New York City, 1860-1862

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ABSTRACT

During the early 1860s, America’s largest city was a hub of socio-economic transformation and upheaval that shaped the future of its urban spaces as well as the republic at large. Race, policing, gender, and politics all intersected at physical cross streets in Manhattan and Brooklyn. The New York Police Department sought to control the “dangerous class” who engaged in violence or riotous destruction of property sowing the seeds of civil disorder. The police also served to curtail what Gotham’s high society termed “social vice,” which included the legal interracial romantic couplings within the dangerous class. This study shows how the police protected social mores by stopping what they called “Amalgamation” and how they tackled early anti-war rioters. The historical information provided by contemporary newspapers and New York literature are a wellspring for intellectual contemplation.

Keywords: Police, race, dangerous class, amalgamation, riot, Civil War, New York City, Brooklyn, vice, Gotham

El “conflicto irreprimible:” vigilancia policial en la era de la guerra civil en la ciudad de Nueva York, 1860-1862

RESUMEN

A principios de la década de 1860, la ciudad más grande de Estados Unidos fue un centro de transformación y agitación socioeconómica que dio forma al futuro de sus espacios urbanos, así como a la república en general. La raza, la policía, el género y la política se cruzaban en cruces de calles físicas en Manhattan y Brooklyn. El Departamento de Policía de Nueva York buscó controlar a la “clase peligrosa” que participaba en actos violentos o en la destrucción desenfrenada de la propiedad, sembrando las semillas del desorden civil. La policía también sirvió para restringir lo que la alta sociedad de Gotham denominó “vicio social”, que incluía las parejas románticas interraciales legales dentro de la clase peligrosa. Este

estudio muestra cómo la policía protegió las costumbres sociales al detener lo que llamaron “Fusión” y cómo abordaron a los primeros alborotadores pacifistas. La información histórica proporcionada por los periódicos contemporáneos y la literatura de Nueva York es una fuente para la contemplación intelectual.

Palabras clave: Policía, raza, clase peligrosa, fusión, disturbios, Guerra Civil, Ciudad de Nueva York, Brooklyn, vicio, Gotham

“难以抑制的冲突”：内战时期纽约市的治安（1860-1862年）

摘要

19世纪60年代早期，美国最大的城市（纽约）是社会经济转型和动荡的中心，这种转型和动荡影响了其城市空间和美利坚合众国的未来。种族、治安、性别和政治都汇聚在曼哈顿和布鲁克林的十字路口。纽约警察局试图控制“危险阶级”（dangerous class），后者参与暴力或破坏公物，洒下引起内战骚乱的种子。警方也对被哥谭（Gotham）上流社会称为“社会恶习”的行为加以限制，这包括涉及危险阶级的合法种族间浪漫关系。本研究表明了警方如何以制止被其称为“异族通婚”（amalgamation）关系的方式保护社会风俗，以及其如何应对早期的反战争暴乱者。由当代报纸和关于纽约的文献所提供的历史信息是理智思考的源泉。

关键词：警方，种族，危险阶级，异族通婚（amalgamation），暴动，内战，纽约市，布鲁克林，恶习，哥谭（Gotham）

“**A** Filthy Den!” the *Daily Brooklyn Eagle* declared in a tabloid-esque title regarding the address at number 4 York Street, where various “disreputable characters” had been making “intolerable noises . . . during the whole of the night,” thus disturbing civil order in the city of Brooklyn. Dispatched were New York policemen Crafts, Bedell, and Phelan around 3 o’clock in the morning of August 6th, 1862, to deal with the matter. “Nine persons of different sexes, lying on the floor without any regard to property whatever” were arrested and taken “to the station house . . . they

were brought before Judge Perry this morning," who charged them with vagrancy.¹ This was often how the police dispensed with perpetrators of crime or social vice in the city, by arresting and charging them with violations that they saw as appropriate to the situation. This event shed light on how police discretion tackled vagrants of possible sexual deviance within the conservative social mores that prevailed regarding love and sexuality in 1860's New York City. Unlike its modern incarnation, the mid-19th century NYPD served New York's elite by enforcing social norms like prohibition against interracial couplings and riotous behavior resulting in civil disorder and wanton destruction of property.

The New York Police Department's (NYPD) function during the early years, starting from its founding in 1845, was partially different than its present incarnation.² The NYPD can be perceived as an "administrative or judicial" body, and patrolmen acted accordingly. The patrolmen must interpret the meaning and violations of laws, to determine if a particular action is a crime for which to carry out arrests. As far as the administrative function is concerned, the NYPD served the governments of either the state or the city depending on the law in the 1850s and 1860s. Acting as a security bureaucracy, they had obligations to carry out changes in legislation, and used "positive and negative sanctions to ensure legislation . . . [got] carried out." The status quo was sustained.³

"Police discretion was part of New York's "nether side," something

everybody knew existed but did not talk about much unless it threatened to escape its informal boundaries."⁴ This discretion was an essential asset that New York policemen would employ in order to operate properly such that crimes could be prevented and the social/racial structures maintained. The police had the ability to decide what they saw as criminal or an arrestable offence based on their understanding of their work, vice suppression, and the law. Policeman George Walling mentions in his *Recollections of a New York Chief of Police* (1887) that "the police . . . are sometimes dilatory in bringing culprits to justice, or, as has happened time and time again, mete out punishment themselves."⁵ The NYPD's conception of justice during the 1860s was centered around city and state law as well as anti-vice practices. Police discretion was a key tool of the NYPD during the Civil War-era, as it still is today.

The important difference between the New York Police in the present and during the Civil War-era is the former's use of the concept of a "dangerous class" which was thought to be the sole producer of criminal behavior and conduct. The police, by dipping into this section of society, could prevent crime as well as social vice, and maintain the status quo. The "idea of preventing criminal behavior found the perfect means of implementation in the concept of... [a] crime-producing 'dangerous class'; for only by focusing on crime producers could criminal behavior be prevented."⁶ The "dangerous class," as the urban historian Eric Monkkonen postulates,

is the focus of the New York Police's function, to suppress various criminal conduct and maintain orderliness. "Respectable New Yorkers knew who the 'dangerous classes' were. They were foreign-born, largely Irish, unskilled workers who possessed ominous political influence" because of their naturalized citizenship thereby giving them the ability to vote.⁷ These Irish working-class people were not exclusively the members of the "dangerous class," for the police repressed "amalgamation" as a form of racial cohesion and suppressed racial violence in order to maintain the rule of law. What the social historian Wilbur Miller describes as the "dangerous class" acted as a catalyst for events and actions that require vice/crime-suppression, whether it is amalgamation or racial rioting.

Yet another function of the NYPD was its struggle to maintain order in the cities of Brooklyn and Manhattan from white working-class violence, and volatile race relations that would threaten society during the years 1860-1862. This function can shed light on how the New York Police during early phases of the Civil War repressed personal liberty as a form of vice and collective state violence. The police dictated black and white working-class life (i.e., control over the "dangerous class") through the use of arrests, although not exclusively, protection services, and general policing tactics. The primary sources used here are local newspapers such as the *New York Times*, the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, the *New York Herald* and Police-man George Walling's *Recollections*.

An examination of this evidence indicates that these accounts have differing perceptions on how police act within New York urban society. The political fault lines of city living divided the masses and the elite with both split roughly into the factions of Fernando Wood's Democrats and the relatively new Republican Party. These two parties were in competition for control over the NYPD and ultimately city authority. Police were obligated to uphold order and to enforce federal policy while most of the city's manpower has been diverted to the Union Army.

The nationally polarized political parties inflamed conflict and violence in the city. "The close relationship between police and local politics in the nineteenth century tended to produce a self-perpetuating culture of violence."⁸ The first main event is the fight over control of the NYPD that had sparked the Great New York Police Riot of 1857, which began when the Republican controlled New York State legislature attempted to wrestle jurisdiction of the police away from Manhattan's Mayor Fernando Wood. Mayor Wood rejected the Metropolitan Police Act since "the counties of New York [Manhattan], Kings [Brooklyn], Westchester, and Richmond were made [into] one police district, to be controlled by a board of commissioners, consisting of five members appointed by the Governor and Senate, and to hold office for five years . . . Mayor Wood denied the constitutionality of the act and retained the old police—so that there were two police departments existing at the same time in the city."⁹ Republican reformers

in the state capital at Albany created a new Metropolitan Police force and by law ended the Municipal Police as part of their effort to restrict the Wood Democrats' control over Manhattan.¹⁰ Notably, this act united all of the police offices in the listed counties under one police department.

Resistant to being halted from total control over policing, Mayor Fernando Wood and the Municipal Police Officers contested the act for a few months such that both the Metropolitan Police and Municipal Police patrolled the streets of New York County. The Republican backed Metropolitan Police had 300 officers and seven leaders who defected from the Municipal Police, but it was mostly composed of new recruits with little training. The Democratic Municipal Police were controlled expressly by Fernando Wood, and had upwards of 800 policemen and 15 leaders under his command. The gulf between the different police forces was ethnically divided with German and Irish immigrants mostly filling the ranks of the Municipal Police, and those of English or Dutch descent siding with the Metropolitan Police.¹¹

Violence exploded in mid-June when Metropolitan Policeman George Walling attempted to arrest Mayor Wood, but Walling was promptly thrown out of City Hall by the Municipal Police. He returned to again arrest the mayor with a larger number of Metropolitan Police Officers, but they were attacked by Wood supporters and the Municipal Police. They were repulsed a second time as well; on the third attempt, the State government dispatched

the Seventh Regiment, who were able to arrest Fernando Wood from office and force him to disband his police force.¹² It wouldn't be the last time the military would be used to suppress mob violence in the streets of Gotham when police were unable to. (Gotham is the name given to Manhattan by Washington Irving, the famous American short story writer in his magazine *Salmagundi* in 1807).¹³

The relief the Republicans must have felt for his removal was short lived since he was promptly re-elected in 1859. Tensions, nationally, ran high after Abraham Lincoln had been elected President and South Carolina had seceded in late 1860. With Wood in his second term (1860-1862), the Mayor and his Democrats met the political crisis head on. During his annual message in January 1861, "the mayor actually proposed . . . the secession of the metropolis from the State of New York. Declaring that the city had closer ties with the South than with an intrusive and limiting state government, Wood proposed that New York become a 'free city' that would continue to trade with the seceded states."¹⁴ He cited that by leaving the State of New York, the city could still trade with the soon-to-be Confederate States and avoid high taxation on trade from Albany.

The political situation that arose after the Battle of Fort Sumter posed a particular set of issues for the local government of New York City given the loyalties of Irish Americans in the city to its Copperhead Mayor. The New York Republicans were pretty unified with the party as it stood in Washing-

ton, D.C. The Democrats in the city, on the other hand, had their national-level party divided among various positions on a rough scale from support of the Slaveholders' rebellion to the other side of the spectrum, which was a limited degree of defense for the federal government to preserve the Union.

The struggle for order in Manhattan and Brooklyn divided the populace and the elite. Political parties were used to identified city residents and officials in the coming Civil War. New York Governor Horatio Seymour and Mayor Fernando Wood were Democrats. Superintendent of New York Police John A. Kennedy and Wood's successor in 1863, Mayor George Opdyke were Republicans. It is important to understand that generally, "republicanism found few adherents among workers," such that most of the white working class of the city broadly supported the Democrats.¹⁵ In contrast, an increasing portion of New York's wealthy saw the "contradiction between the forces unleashed by rapid capitalist development and the persistence of slavery, and they saw . . . as well . . . the attendant political power of slaveholders over the federal government, as damaging to their own interests." Eventually, they started to view their interests in line with national or Union war aims. The association between the upper economic class in New York City and the Republican Party was clear because most were "manufacturers, lawyers, and western merchants who had little to lose from a conflict with the South . . ." ¹⁶ The divide between parties was quite heavily

based on the class society of Gotham, although not exclusively.

The start of the Slaveholders' rebellion would also place African Americans directly at the center of political discord. "There was a necessary relation between New York City Blacks' situation as pariahs in North's most proslavery city and their role as creators of the new Northern national consciousness . . ." ¹⁷ Though their numbers were small, Black Manhattanites estimated 12,000 or 1.5 percent of the total population, which was 800,000 in 1860 and were the seventh largest black population in the country. "In the 1860s nearly 85% of Brooklyn's black population resided in the two black communities . . . Borough-Hall-Fort Greene section . . . and . . . in the southern portion of Williamsburg." ¹⁸ They would help to create a new northern consciousness through the Twentieth United States Colored Regiment, but they were also "pariahs" in amalgamation and race riots. It is important to point out that black New Yorkers may not have been directly involved with either political party due to lack of citizenship and disenfranchisement, but it was fairly clear that of the two, the party of Andrew Jackson and the slaveholders would not at all be aligned with their political interests. African Americans in New York City were singled out by police officers, racists, and print media.

A key phrase that the *New York Herald*, the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, and the *New York Times* frequently used was "amalgamation," which was, by definition, interracial romantic and sex-

ual relationships. "Newspaper editors . . . and . . . reformers linked interracial sex with New York's working class . . . [and] accounts of amalgamation among New York's black and white workers [that] had existed since slavery . . . the word 'amalgamation,' with its increasingly negative connotations, was used in relationship with the working classes only after the 1834 [anti-abolitionist] riots."¹⁹ From 1860-1862 in Manhattan, instances of amalgamation were broken up or prevented by New York Police through the curbing of personal liberty and directing working-class people through arrests and "vice" suppression.

White New Yorkers discussed at great length "amalgamation in the 1840s and 1850s . . . [the continuing] the anxiety over sexuality and race that . . . would be a factor in the 1863 Draft Riots. New York State never outlawed interracial marriage, but throughout the antebellum period various groups of white New Yorkers depicted amalgamation as threatening to New York City's social structure."²⁰ Various groups of white New Yorkers, such as reformers and newspaper editors, not only depicted the threat, but they also were able to influence the NYPD enough to tackle this growing social concern as a vice even if it was not technically illegal. They were doing something that was not prescribed, although, it was often practiced to uphold socio-sexual dictum of the city. The effort to suppress "amalgamation" were bipartisan, since police were under control of the Republican state government but individual policemen pursued this vice likely knowing it

was in line with the white supremacist stance of New York Democrats.

At around 10 p.m. on June 10th, 1860, NYPD Officers Sherman and Munn "made a descent upon a notoriously bad 'crib' at the foot of Leonard street [Manhattan] . . . and arrested Eliza . . . and Edward Hays," the black proprietors of the house. They soon discovered that a white woman there, named Mary Hill, was married to an African American. They also discovered "Fanny Corse, William Johnson, Benjamin Portland and M.J. Corse" in the house as well, all of whom were mixed-race individuals. The *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* report goes on to say that also in the house at the time of arrest, were six white men from Williamsburg, stating some were of high respectable connection, and "now known" to police. The report continues that "unless they are more careful in the future, they will not be unknown to fame." In this instance, the lack of police action shows they might've let the white male "amalgamators" off the hook. "They managed to escape, some of them minus portions of their clothing"; the rest of the persons were arrested and brought before Judge Walter "to be disposed of."²¹ This is an example of the NYPD patrolling and policing the vice of "amalgamation." Additionally, it is an example of police discretion because they chose to allow the white male perpetrators of the social deviance to get away but arrested the black and mixed-race perpetrators, many of whom were seemingly the more hazardous part of the "dangerous class" to these NYPD officers.

Another, more obtuse occurrence of “amalgamation” happened on August 29th of that same year and reported by the same paper. NYPD Officer Bennett, who was a detective, arrested a sixteen-year-old girl who supposedly was the only child of her widowed mother. His reason? She was married to an African American named Julius Gray, “a waiter in one of our hotels . . .” The sixteen-year-old was taken to “The Toombs” despite her supposed petition and “of-fered bribes of her . . . lover.” Judge Welsh sentenced her to the “house of refuge until she should attain years of discretion.”²² Officer Bennett here was able to prevent vice from further occurring though neither age of consent laws nor anti-interracial marriage laws existed. The policeman was preventing the continued corruption of “social values” through amalgamation with the process of arrest and relocation.

The *New York Times* reported that police from the Fourth Ward arrested “a large number of inmates, comprising persons of all colors and both sexes” finding that “negro men [occupied] the same rooms with white women and vice versa” in March 1861. It was “one of the most infamous disorderly houses in the City, located at the corner of Oak and Roosevelt streets.” The so-called “proprietor” was a 28-year-old Irish woman named Mary Fleming. The following day they were all arraigned, the black men and white men were “reprimanded and discharged, while the women were committed to Blackwell’s island as vagrants.” This shows that the Metropolitan Police would enforce social normativity and repress this threat to the social

structure so that racial purity could be maintained. The women had been misogynistically derided as “harpies” and the *New York Times* celebrated how police had made sure these individuals were separated.²³ This was the “dangerous class” in operation. They broke the rules that existed as social mores where races didn’t mix romantically and the police were sent in to maintain racial order as well as to prevent this vice.

In the *New York Herald* under the column ‘Police Intelligence’ that April, it was reported that “an Amalgamation Ball [was] Broken up by Police.” Eighth Ward Policemen prevented an interracial social dance from taking place at Constitution Hall on Wooster Street after it was learned that the ball was to involve the mixing of races. Initially, Police Captain Helmes had been requested by a black man to protect their social gathering, “believing that it was only to be a colored ball.” The Police Captain Helmes received a note after the man requesting protection had left. The note specified the “ball, which consists entirely of white women and black men – no black women being admitted” would be “dislodged” by armed “ruffians” with clubs and stones if it were to take place. The article ends with Officers Parmer and Helmes preventing entrance into the Hall, noting that “there were no less than twenty white women, accompanied by darkies.”²⁴ The implications in these two instances are clear, interracial mixing was against the mores of city society and the police would be instrumental in enforcing it even if it wasn’t illegal. This example is a tad different than the incident at the house near Oak

and Roosevelt streets because when police broke up this "amalgamation ball" their function was both to prevent the "dangerous class" from using racial violence against another portion of that same class who were violating the racial norms of the city. The police performed their function without carrying out arrests and simply sent the would-be "amalgamationists" away so they would not stir up trouble.

Lastly, in a most irregular case of amalgamation was reported in the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* regarding a black New Yorker named William Parks, who was charged with "bigamy" and amalgamation after he had married "a mulatto woman named Mary Thompson." Ms. Thompson soon discovered that Mr. Parks would make long visits to his mother's place of living in Manhattan to see a white woman by the name of Ann Clarkson. The article reports that when the police asked his mother who this woman was to him, she said that Clarkson was his wife. Parks denied this and upon Judge Perry questioning of Ms. Clarkson himself in court, she stated that she wasn't his wife. She continued "he told me he loved me and asked me to live with him and I said I would . . . I was satisfied to live with him without being married. He told me to tell any person who asked that I was his wife." The case was postponed for the prosecution to bring forth the mother of the accused (William Parks) to prove that he was married to the white woman. It was likely that this case was not concluded in anyway due to the lack of illegality in an interracial marriage and that to prove the marriage

of Parks and Clarkson would do nothing legally. However, his amalgamation was a vice to suppress. This occasion of amalgamation provides an interesting twist of marital infidelity on the part of Mr. Parks and it was ultimately curbed due to the over prevailing view that it was a threat to the social structure. This is also an incident of amalgamation that crossed the lines of the twin cities Brooklyn and Manhattan.²⁵

In the twin city of Brooklyn, during August 1862 (a month before the Battle of Antietam) the NYPD would be used to enforce federal policy in order to protect black workmen, women, and children in a tobacco factory and control the "dangerous class." The T. Watson and Company Tobacco Factory on Sedgewick Street in Brooklyn came under attack by four hundred Irish men of the locality.²⁶ The *New York Times* reported that hundreds of Irishmen gathered together and were provoked by "a portion of the secession Press of this city" until they rioted.²⁷ The story of the riot is corroborated by the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* to a much greater detail noting that seventy-five workers were employed at the factory. Of this number, fifty were black workers and the other twenty-five were white. T. Watson's factory was started some eight years prior, the *Brooklyn Eagle* reported, and that some of the Black workers currently employed there were there since the founding although some were not of the locality but from Manhattan.²⁸

The *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* continued, "It is said that for some time

past, considerable ill-feeling has existed in the vicinity of the tobacco factory, most of whom are Irish.” This was a rise of racist tensions that would come to a head the day before the riot in front of “Grady’s liquor Store” where two African American men stood blocking the entrance. A fight broke out between the two Black men blocking the door and two Irishmen wishing to enter after one of the Irishmen knocked one of the Black men to the ground. The brawl was ended by quickly police, but it was enough to spark wild rumors that would stir up racial tensions and rage from the Irish people in the area.²⁹

On that Monday, August 4th, 1862, Mr. Hignet, the foreman of the adjacent Lorrillard Tobacco factory, went to Watson’s factory around 8 o’clock to warn all the black workers there that they should leave due to rumors of an attack being planned on them. The 20 workers present declined and the *Brooklyn Eagle* stated that of the 20, five were men and the rest were women and children. Around 12 o’clock the white workers departed the factory leaving the only the black workers in the building and about a half-hour later hundreds of enraged Irishmen (many intoxicated) arrived at the factory. They entered the factory’s first floor, but fortunately the black workers were on the upper floors of the building having blocked the stairwell. Policemen Oates and Byrnes of the 43rd precinct responded but were unable to prevent the mob from entering the factory.³⁰ As the “mob approached the place screaming like infuriated demons, and crying out, ‘kill the d—n n-s,’ ‘Burn the n-s,’ . .

. The factory was surrounded.”³¹ To the modern observer, this report can foreshadow the genocidal rhetoric and action that was taken up by similar Irish rioters in the July, 1863 Draft Riots. The mob-scene was motivated by racist beliefs and the portion of the “dangerous class” here were about to engage in highly criminal behavior.

One of the black workmen was taken by the mob and almost fatally assaulted prior to the police arrival. With their clubs, the policemen beat into the mob which occupied the first floor of the three-story building. Then they were stopped by the quasi-leader Patrick Keenan, a candidate for Alderman in the Sixth Ward, when he gave directions to set the building ablaze. The rioting Irishmen set afire tar and wood thereby the police’s focus was turned to extinguishing the flames. While they attempted to extinguish the fire, the policemen were repeatedly attacked with bricks and stones by the mob. Finally, the fire was put out and the riot dispersed by which point the *New York Times* said it “numbered several thousand persons.”³²

The quasi-leader Patrick Keenan was arrested afterward stating “that he was called upon by Officer Oates to assist in quelling the riot and that he had nothing whatever to do with it and knew nothing of it.”³³ The semi-leader attempted here to rid himself of fault but was to no avail since he would be tried in court over the following weeks. Though it is unknown his fate in the trial, Patrick Keenan later would appear in the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* as a delegate

of the uncontested Sixth Ward for the Union Democratic General Committee under Governor Seymour.³⁴ Racist violence, it would seem, was carried out by both the mob as well as the police. "It is stated that the officers who were first at the scene of the riot, allowed their feelings against the negroes to interfere with their duties and that instead of attacking the white rioters they struck at the negroes with their clubs."³⁵ It was likely Policemen Oates and Byrnes since they were the first to arrive at the riot. These policemen failed to carry out their function.

Surprisingly similar to the Great Police Riot no one was killed, only several policemen and free African Americans were injured. The NYPD told the black workers that they could go on working with their protection, but it was clear the women and children wished to go home. And then they were brought there under police guard.³⁶ This Brooklyn riot is vital to understanding the political society of New York City. "Many whites resented the employment of blacks in jobs that they wanted" and the two often competed for work.³⁷ The *New York Times* correctly stated that police authorities in the area neglected to respond to the impending mob and that they likely knew the results of inaction.

The police authorities had been notified that an attempt would be made by Irishmen to drive the negroes from all work in this city, and local Press had been indirectly urging such an onslaught. More than this, the police of the

Forty-third Precinct ought to have known, and probably did know, that an attack upon these factories was contemplated, and had proper precautions been used, Brooklyn might have been spared this disgraceful affair of yesterday.³⁸

This article is followed up by the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* reporting that both "Mr. Folk and Capt. Holbrook . . . [had] the charges against them dismissed." The charges against them were "for neglect of duty, in the recent negro riot at the Tobacco Factory. . ." ³⁹ These men delayed their services and with Policemen Oates and Byrnes likely participated in the mob action against the black workers (since they were the first on the scene), and only performed their function to suppress the "dangerous class" after they stopped participating in that "class." These officers were still ultimately let free in a miscarriage of justice as well as miscarriage of police function.

At the time of the Civil War, a "period of rising wages and prices, police pay for the first time fell below the wages of skilled workers." Before this "skilled workers made up most of the recruits, but in the sixties they began resigning and replacements could be obtained only from the unskilled labor force."⁴⁰ This trend can be seen as the cause for the drop in the number of New York policemen as well as in their quality. The men the NYPD had enlisted were not the top quality of patrolmen and certainly were not skilled enough to function in their most proper capacity either against the criminal element

or the oncoming mob. Police Officers Oates, Byrnes, Folk, and Captain Halbrook all exhibited the tendencies of the unskilled workers hired by the NYPD since they all in one way or another did not function in the proper way police officers were expected to given the riot situation. Folk and Halbrook delayed their police protection to the trapped black laborers and Oates and Byrnes who first arrived on the scene to stop the “dangerous class” were initially enthused to participate in the criminal behavior of the mob. This was a blurring of the thin blue line which separated the order-maintainers and the chaos of the racist mobbers.

In the days following, the *New York Herald* depicted the attack on the tobacco factory as an event that would fan the flames of racism in the city. The newspaper did this by asserting that a plan by abolitionist “capitalists” had been created to supplant white workers with black ones. “The agitators whom puff Sambo up with absurd ideas of his importance are to blame.”⁴¹ Conversely, the pro-Union papers like the *New York Times*, defended the black workers in conjunction with fresh criticisms on the Irish rioters and the anti-war advocates as the responsible parties.⁴² The *New York Times* essentially accused the *New York Herald* of spurring on the Irishmen to attack black New York workers.⁴³ This instance highlights that the police during the early phases of the Civil War were able to deal with working-class criminal behavior and their collective mob action but this particular NYPD precinct chose to delay their services. Sympathizers were highly divided with-

in the functionaries of government operation themselves.

It was noted by the *New York Times* shortly after the Brooklyn riot that the debacle “suggests anew the importance of a system of police drill in what may be called mob-tactics or street strategy . . . In Europe . . . this art is brought to a high degree of perfection, and the police will enter and segregate and scatter a mob with . . . ease.”⁴⁴ It would be many years before the NYPD would adopt these anti-mobbing tactics. Joel T. Headley in his book *The Great Riots of New York* (1873) suggests, ten years after the Draft Riots, that the police leaders should “select five hundred or more of the most . . . experienced, and efficient men . . . and form them into a separate battalion, and have them drilled in such evolutions, manoeuvres, and modes of attack or defence” to deal swiftly with riots and mob violence.⁴⁵ With the proper number of NYPD officers and “mob-tactics” training, the New York Police would have been able to function properly to maintain order and prevent crime in the city but this would be many decades away from being carried out.

The NYPD’s function in the early Civil War-era was to suppress crime, vice, patrol race relations, hold down racialized violence in the dangerous class and reduce “threats” to society. One can see clearly that political society in New York City was split along narrow party lines. New York elite Republicans and functioning policemen were on one side and the white working class as well as Democrats were on the

other. During this era, Police Officers repressed personal liberty as a vice in the cases of "amalgamation," racial violence, and dictated black and white working-class life for various political reasons whether they were Republican or Democratic in motivation.

The cases of "amalgamation" in Manhattan provide an interesting view of police function since interracial marriage wasn't illegal. These cases show that even though it was not prescribed, arrest of "amalgamationists" were often practiced to uphold socio-sexual rules of the city which separated romantic partners by race. It seems, white New York newspaper editors and reformers had enough influence in the city such that the NYPD would carry out arrests on "amalgamators." This police function was important in New York County during the early phase of the Civil War; however, it was overshadowed likely by the increase in racialized rioting.

The Brooklyn Riot of 1862 sheds a great deal of light on New York Police function as it stood in other boroughs. These policemen, though they ultimately suppressed the hundreds of rioting Irish people from committing violence against Black Americans, did so with a significant delay in protection services to prevent crime. Two policemen even participated in the attack on the factory workers before they carried out their function. As mentioned, the quality of recruits was low due to the fall in police wages. This initial failure of function is important in understanding the further

failures in the Manhattan Draft Riots of 1863 because even in the police department itself, government functionaries were highly divided by racial attitudes which can indicate political party.

The exposed race and class strains of New York City living had been "exacerbated by the war experience, [and] the draft riot haunted New York's elite long after its suppression, serving as a reminder of the threat posed by the 'dangerous class.'"⁴⁶ New York Police function was to suppress the crime of rioting which had been caused by the radical economic changes that were underway in both the state and republic as a whole. This was vital to keeping control and maintaining order in the city because if the working class could successfully resist the economic change, they'd place interests of New York's elite Republicans in danger by tacitly aiding the unrecognized Confederate States of America. New York policemen would use an arrest to prevent crime as well as vice and, in many instances, to prevent violations of social norms like amalgamation in the biracial "dangerous class." Police also functioned in preventing crime by fighting back against white rioters or by defending black Americans so that crime could not be further carried out against them. Preventing threats to the racial order of the city and holding down the riotous white portion of the "dangerous class" were the tasks the NYPD carried out in order to prevent the city from falling into chaos during wartime.

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